



**New Copy**  
**House of Representatives**

General Assembly

**File No. 650**

January Session, 2021

Substitute House Bill No. 6620

*House of Representatives, May 10, 2021*

The Committee on Appropriations reported through REP. WALKER of the 93rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO READ AND ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) For the school year  
2 commencing July 1, 2023, and each school year thereafter, each local and  
3 regional board of education shall implement a reading curriculum  
4 model or program for grades prekindergarten to grade five, inclusive,  
5 that has been approved by the Center for Literacy Research and Reading  
6 Success, pursuant to section 2 of this act.

7 (b) On or before July 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, each local and  
8 regional board of education shall notify the Commissioner of Education  
9 and the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success of which  
10 reading curriculum model or program that the board is implementing.

11 (c) If a local or regional board of education demonstrates to the  
12 Commissioner of Education that such board has insufficient resources

13 or funding to implement any of the reading curriculum model or  
14 programs, the commissioner may grant such board an extension of time,  
15 provided such board demonstrates continued efforts to implement a  
16 reading curriculum model or program.

17 (d) The Commissioner of Education may, upon request of a local or  
18 regional board of education, grant a waiver from the provisions of  
19 subsection (a) of this section to such board to implement a reading  
20 curriculum model or program other than one adopted by the Center for  
21 Literacy Research and Reading Success, provided such reading  
22 curriculum or model is (1) evidenced-based and scientifically-based,  
23 and (2) focused on competency in the five areas of reading: Phonemic  
24 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading  
25 fluency, including oral skills and reading comprehension, as  
26 determined by the commissioner in consultation with the center.

27 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) Not later than July 1, 2022, the  
28 Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, established pursuant  
29 to section 9 of this act, shall approve at least five reading curriculum  
30 models or programs to be implemented by local and regional boards of  
31 education in accordance with the provisions of section 1 of this act. Such  
32 reading curriculum models or programs shall be (1) evidenced-based  
33 and scientifically-based, and (2) focused on competency in the five areas  
34 of reading: Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary  
35 development, and reading fluency, including oral skills and reading  
36 comprehension.

37 Sec. 3. Section 10-1600 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
38 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

39 Not later than July 1, 2012, the Department of Education shall  
40 approve and make available model curricula and frameworks in  
41 [reading and] mathematics for grades prekindergarten to grade four,  
42 inclusive, for use by local and regional boards of education for school  
43 districts or individual schools identified by the department as having  
44 [academic achievement] opportunity gaps. Such curricula and  
45 frameworks shall be culturally relevant, research-based and aligned

46 with student achievement standards adopted by the State Board of  
47 Education. For purposes of this section, ["achievement] "opportunity  
48 gaps" means the existence of a significant disparity in the academic  
49 performance of students among and between (1) racial groups, (2) ethnic  
50 groups, (3) socioeconomic groups, (4) genders, and (5) English language  
51 learners and students whose primary language is English.

52 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 10-16b of the general statutes, as  
53 amended by section 1 of public act 19-12, is repealed and the following  
54 is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

55 (a) In the public schools the program of instruction offered shall  
56 include at least the following subject matter, as taught by legally  
57 qualified teachers, the arts; career education; consumer education;  
58 health and safety, including, but not limited to, human growth and  
59 development, nutrition, first aid, including cardiopulmonary  
60 resuscitation training in accordance with the provisions of section 10-  
61 16qq, disease prevention and cancer awareness, including, but not  
62 limited to, age and developmentally appropriate instruction in  
63 performing self-examinations for the purposes of screening for breast  
64 cancer and testicular cancer, community and consumer health, physical,  
65 mental and emotional health, including youth suicide prevention,  
66 substance abuse prevention, including instruction relating to opioid use  
67 and related disorders, safety, which shall include the safe use of social  
68 media, as defined in section 9-601, and may include the dangers of gang  
69 membership, and accident prevention; language arts, including reading,  
70 writing, grammar, speaking and spelling; mathematics; physical  
71 education; science, which may include the climate change curriculum  
72 described in subsection (d) of this section; social studies, including, but  
73 not limited to, citizenship, economics, geography, government, history  
74 and Holocaust and genocide education and awareness in accordance  
75 with the provisions of section 10-18f; African-American and black  
76 studies in accordance with the provisions of section 10-16ss, as amended  
77 by this act; Puerto Rican and Latino studies in accordance with the  
78 provisions of section 10-16ss, as amended by this act; computer  
79 programming instruction; and in addition, on at least the secondary

80 level, one or more world languages; vocational education; and the black  
81 and Latino studies course in accordance with the provisions of sections  
82 10-16tt and 10-16uu, as amended by this act. For purposes of this  
83 subsection, world languages shall include American Sign Language,  
84 provided such subject matter is taught by a qualified instructor under  
85 the supervision of a teacher who holds a certificate issued by the State  
86 Board of Education. For purposes of this subsection, the "arts" means  
87 any form of visual or performing arts, which may include, but not be  
88 limited to, dance, music, art and theatre; "reading" means evidenced-  
89 based instruction that focuses on competency in the five areas of  
90 reading: Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary  
91 development and reading fluency, including oral skills and reading  
92 comprehension.

93 (b) If a local or regional board of education requires its pupils to take  
94 a course in a world language, the parent or guardian of a pupil  
95 identified as deaf or hard of hearing may request in writing that such  
96 pupil be exempted from such requirement and, if such a request is  
97 made, such pupil shall be exempt from such requirement.

98 (c) Each local and regional board of education shall on September 1,  
99 1982, and annually thereafter at such time and in such manner as the  
100 Commissioner of Education shall request, attest to the State Board of  
101 Education that such local or regional board of education offers at least  
102 the program of instruction required pursuant to this section, and that  
103 such program of instruction is planned, ongoing and systematic.

104 (d) The State Board of Education shall make available curriculum  
105 materials and such other materials as may assist local and regional  
106 boards of education in developing instructional programs pursuant to  
107 this section. The State Board of Education, within available  
108 appropriations and utilizing available resource materials, shall assist  
109 and encourage local and regional boards of education to include: (1)  
110 Holocaust and genocide education and awareness; (2) the historical  
111 events surrounding the Great Famine in Ireland; (3) African-American  
112 and black studies; (4) Puerto Rican and Latino studies; (5) Native

113 American history; (6) personal financial management, including, but not  
114 limited to, financial literacy as developed in the plan provided under  
115 section 10-16pp; (7) training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the  
116 use of automatic external defibrillators; (8) labor history and law,  
117 including organized labor, the collective bargaining process, existing  
118 legal protections in the workplace, the history and economics of free  
119 market capitalism and entrepreneurialism, and the role of labor and  
120 capitalism in the development of the American and world economies;  
121 (9) climate change consistent with the Next Generation Science  
122 Standards; (10) topics approved by the state board upon the request of  
123 local or regional boards of education as part of the program of  
124 instruction offered pursuant to subsection (a) of this section; and (11)  
125 instruction relating to the Safe Haven Act, sections 17a-57 to 17a-61,  
126 inclusive. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
127 shall be available to each local and regional board of education for the  
128 development of curriculum on climate change as described in this  
129 subsection.

130 Sec. 5. Section 10-14t of the general statutes is repealed and the  
131 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

132 (a) [On or before January 1, 2016, the Department of Education shall  
133 develop or approve] On or before January 1, 2022, the Center for  
134 Literacy Research and Reading Success, established pursuant to section  
135 9 of this act, shall compile a list of approved reading assessments for use  
136 by local and regional boards of education for the school year  
137 commencing July 1, [2016] 2023, and each school year thereafter, to  
138 identify students in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, who  
139 are below proficiency in reading, provided any such reading  
140 assessments [developed or approved by the department] include  
141 frequent screening and progress monitoring of students. Such reading  
142 assessments shall (1) measure phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency,  
143 vocabulary, and comprehension, (2) provide opportunities for periodic  
144 formative assessment during the school year, (3) produce data that is  
145 useful for informing individual and classroom instruction, including the  
146 grouping of students based on such data and the selection of

147 instructional activities based on data of individual student response  
148 patterns during such progress monitoring, (4) be compatible with best  
149 practices in reading instruction and research, and (5) assist in  
150 identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia, as defined  
151 in section 10-3d, or other reading-related learning disabilities.

152 (b) Not later than [February 1, 2016] January 15, 2022, the  
153 Commissioner of Education shall submit the list of approved reading  
154 assessments [developed or approved] compiled under this section to the  
155 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
156 matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of  
157 section 11-4a.

158 Sec. 6. Section 10-14u of the general statutes is repealed and the  
159 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

160 (a) As used in this section:

161 (1) ["Achievement gap"] "Opportunity gaps" means the existence of a  
162 significant disparity in the academic performance of students among  
163 and between (A) racial groups, (B) ethnic groups, (C) socioeconomic  
164 groups, (D) genders, and (E) English language learners and students  
165 whose primary language is English.

166 (2) "Scientifically-based reading research and instruction" means (A)  
167 a comprehensive program or a collection of instructional practices that  
168 is based on reliable, valid evidence showing that when such programs  
169 or practices are used, students can be expected to achieve satisfactory  
170 reading progress, and (B) the integration of instructional strategies for  
171 continuously assessing, evaluating and communicating the student's  
172 reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing  
173 interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read  
174 and comprehend text and apply higher level thinking skills. Such  
175 comprehensive program or collection of practices [shall include]  
176 includes, but is not [be] limited to, instruction in five areas of reading:  
177 Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and  
178 [text comprehension] reading fluency, including oral skills and reading

179 comprehension.

180 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, [2014] 2021, and each  
181 school year thereafter, the Commissioner of Education, in consultation  
182 with the director of the Center for Literacy Research and Reading  
183 Success, established pursuant to section 9 of this act, shall create an  
184 intensive reading instruction program to improve student literacy in  
185 grades kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, and close the  
186 [achievement gap] opportunity gaps. Such intensive reading instruction  
187 program shall include routine reading assessments for students in  
188 kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, scientifically-based reading  
189 research and instruction, an intensive reading intervention strategy, as  
190 described in subsection (c) of this section, supplemental reading  
191 instruction and reading remediation plans, as described in subsection  
192 (d) of this section, and an intensive summer school reading program, as  
193 described in subsection (e) of this section. [For the school year  
194 commencing July 1, 2014, the commissioner shall select five elementary  
195 schools that are (1) located in an educational reform district, as defined  
196 in section 10-262u, (2) participating in the commissioner's network of  
197 schools, pursuant to section 10-223h, or (3) among the lowest five per  
198 cent of elementary schools in school subject performance indices for  
199 reading and mathematics, as defined in section 10-223e, to participate in  
200 the intensive reading instruction program and for the school year  
201 commencing July 1, 2015, and each school year thereafter, the  
202 commissioner may select up to five additional such elementary schools  
203 to participate in the intensive reading instruction program.] For the  
204 school year commencing July 1, 2021, and each school year thereafter,  
205 the commissioner, in consultation with the Center for Literacy Research  
206 and Reading Success, shall provide, upon request of a local or regional  
207 board of education for a town designated as an alliance district, as  
208 defined in section 10-262u, as amended by this act, the intensive reading  
209 instruction program to such board, or may include the intensive reading  
210 instruction program in the tiered supports in early literacy provided  
211 under the reading readiness program pursuant to section 10-14y, as  
212 amended by this act.

213 (c) On or before July 1, [2014] 2021, the Department of Education, in  
214 consultation with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success,  
215 shall develop an intensive reading intervention strategy for use by  
216 [schools selected by the Commissioner of Education to participate in the  
217 intensive reading instruction program to address the achievement gap  
218 at such schools and] any elementary school located in an alliance district  
219 that enrolls students who are not reading at or above grade level to  
220 ensure that [all] such students are reading proficiently by grade [three]  
221 five in such schools. Such intensive reading intervention strategy [for  
222 schools] shall (1) include, but not be limited to, (A) rigorous assessments  
223 in reading skills, (B) scientifically-based reading research and  
224 instruction, (C) [one external literacy coach for] external literacy coaches  
225 made available to each school, [to be funded by the department,] who  
226 will work with the reading data collected, support the principal of the  
227 school as needed, observe, and coach classes and supervise the reading  
228 interventions, (D) [four] reading interventionists [for each school, to be  
229 funded by the department,] who will develop a reading remediation  
230 plan for any student who is reading below proficiency, be responsible  
231 for all supplemental reading instruction, and conduct reading  
232 assessments as needed, and (E) training for teachers and administrators  
233 in scientifically-based reading research and instruction, including,  
234 training for school administrators on how to assess a classroom to  
235 ensure that all children are proficient in reading by grade [three] five,  
236 and (2) outline, at a minimum, how (A) reading data will be collected,  
237 analyzed and used for purposes of instructional development, (B)  
238 professional and leadership development will be related to reading data  
239 analysis and used to support individual teacher and classroom needs,  
240 (C) [the selected] schools will communicate with parents and guardians  
241 of students on reading instruction strategies and student reading  
242 performance goals, and on opportunities for parents and guardians to  
243 partner with teachers and school administrators to improve reading at  
244 home and at school, (D) teachers and school leaders will be trained in  
245 the science of teaching reading, (E) periodic student progress reports  
246 will be issued, and (F) such [selected school] intensive reading  
247 intervention strategy will be monitored at the classroom level. The

248 commissioner shall review and evaluate the [school] intensive reading  
249 intervention strategy for model components that may be used and  
250 replicated in other [schools and school districts] alliance districts to  
251 ensure that all children are proficient in reading by grade [three] five.

252 (d) (1) For the school year commencing July 1, [2014] 2021, and each  
253 school year thereafter, each [school selected by the Commissioner of  
254 Education to participate in the intensive reading instruction program  
255 under this section shall] local and regional board of education for a town  
256 designated as an alliance district shall, in consultation with the director  
257 of the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, provide  
258 supplemental reading instruction to students in kindergarten to grade  
259 [three] five, inclusive, who are reading below proficiency, as identified  
260 by the reading assessment described in section 10-14t, as amended by  
261 this act. Such supplemental reading instruction shall be provided by a  
262 reading interventionist during regular school hours.

263 (2) A reading remediation plan shall be developed by a reading  
264 interventionist for each student enrolled in an elementary school in an  
265 alliance district in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, who has  
266 been identified as reading below proficiency to address and correct the  
267 reading deficiency of such student. Such remediation plan shall include  
268 instructional strategies that utilize [research based] research-based  
269 reading instruction materials and teachers trained in reading  
270 instruction, parental involvement in the implementation of the  
271 remediation plan and regular progress reports on such student.

272 (3) The principal of [a school selected by the Commissioner of  
273 Education to participate in the intensive reading instruction program  
274 under this section] each elementary school in an alliance district shall  
275 notify the parent or guardian of any student in kindergarten to grade  
276 [three] five, inclusive, who has been identified as being below  
277 proficiency in reading. Such notice shall be in writing and (A) include  
278 an explanation of why such student is below proficiency in reading, and  
279 (B) inform such parent or guardian that a remediation plan, as described  
280 in subdivision (2) of this subsection, will be developed for such student

281 to provide supplemental reading instruction, including strategies for  
282 the parent or guardian to use at home with such student.

283 (e) (1) [Any student enrolled in a school selected by the  
284 Commissioner of Education that is located in a priority school district,  
285 pursuant to section 10-266p, to participate in the intensive reading  
286 instruction program under this section and who is reading below  
287 proficiency at the end of the school year shall be enrolled in] Each local  
288 and regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance  
289 district shall, in consultation with the director of the Center for Literacy  
290 Research and Reading Success, provide any student in kindergarten to  
291 grade five, inclusive, who is reading below proficiency at the end of the  
292 school year with an intensive summer school reading instruction  
293 program. Such intensive summer school reading instruction program  
294 shall include, (A) a comprehensive reading intervention program, (B)  
295 scientifically-based reading research and instruction strategies and  
296 interventions, (C) diagnostic assessments administered to a student  
297 prior to or during an intensive summer school reading instruction  
298 program to determine such student's particularized need for  
299 instruction, (D) teachers who are trained in the teaching of reading and  
300 reading assessment and intervention, and (E) weekly progress  
301 monitoring to assess the reading progress of such student and tailor  
302 instruction for such student.

303 (2) [The principal of a school selected by the Commissioner of  
304 Education to participate in] Each local and regional board of education  
305 for a town designated as an alliance district providing supplemental  
306 reading instruction as part of the intensive reading instruction program  
307 under this section shall submit reports to the Department of Education,  
308 at such time and in such manner as prescribed by the department, on  
309 (A) student reading progress for each student reading below proficiency  
310 based on the data collected from the screening and progress monitoring  
311 of such student using the reading assessments described in section 10-  
312 14t, as amended by this act, and (B) the specific reading interventions  
313 and supports implemented.

314 (f) Not later than October 1, [2015] 2021, and annually thereafter, the  
315 department shall report to the joint standing committee of the General  
316 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in  
317 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on student reading  
318 levels [in schools participating] in the intensive reading instruction  
319 program. Such report shall include recommendations on model  
320 components of the school intensive reading intervention strategy that  
321 may be used and replicated in other [schools and school districts]  
322 alliance districts.

323 Sec. 7. Section 10-14v of the general statutes is repealed and the  
324 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

325 On or before January 1, [2014] 2021, the Department of Education, in  
326 collaboration with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success  
327 established pursuant to section 9 of this act, shall develop a coordinated  
328 state-wide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade [three]  
329 five, inclusive, that contains strategies and frameworks that are  
330 research-driven to produce effective reading instruction and  
331 improvement in student performance. Such plan shall include: (1) The  
332 alignment of reading standards, instruction and assessments for  
333 students in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive; (2) teachers' use  
334 of data on the progress of all students to adjust and differentiate  
335 instructional practices to improve student reading success; (3) the  
336 collection of information concerning each student's reading  
337 background, level and progress so that teachers can use such  
338 information to assist in the transition of a student's promotion to the  
339 next grade level; (4) an intervention for each student who is not making  
340 adequate progress in reading to help such student read at the  
341 appropriate grade level; (5) enhanced reading instruction for students  
342 who are reading at or above their grade level; (6) the coordination of  
343 reading instruction activities between parents, students, teachers and  
344 administrators of the school district at home and in school; (7) school  
345 district reading plans; (8) parental involvement by providing parents  
346 and guardians of students with opportunities for partnering with  
347 teachers and school administrators to (A) create an optimal learning

348 environment, and (B) receive updates on the reading progress of their  
349 student; (9) teacher training and reading performance tests aligned with  
350 teacher preparation courses and professional development activities;  
351 (10) incentives for schools that have demonstrated significant  
352 improvement in student reading; (11) research-based literacy training  
353 for early childhood care and education providers and instructors  
354 working with children birth to five years of age, inclusive, and transition  
355 plans relating to oral language and preliteracy proficiency for children  
356 between prekindergarten and kindergarten; (12) the alignment of  
357 reading instruction with the common core state standards adopted by  
358 the State Board of Education; and (13) the alignment of reading  
359 instruction with the two-generational initiative established pursuant to  
360 section 17b-112l.

361 Sec. 8. Section 10-14y of the general statutes is repealed and the  
362 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

363 (a) The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Center for  
364 Literacy Research and Reading Success established pursuant to section  
365 9 of this act, shall, within available appropriations, establish a reading  
366 readiness program that provides tiered supports in early literacy to each  
367 school district designated as an alliance district, pursuant to section 10-  
368 262u, as amended by this act, and each school participating in the  
369 commissioner's network of schools, pursuant to section 10-223h. The  
370 department shall conduct an assessment of the reading readiness of  
371 students enrolled in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, for  
372 each such school and school district. Such reading readiness assessment  
373 shall consider any combination of the following: (1) Whether such  
374 school or school district has developed and is implementing a multiyear  
375 plan and allocated resources specifically for early literacy in  
376 kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, (2) whether teachers and  
377 administrators have received training regarding the science of teaching  
378 reading, and the extent to which teachers and administrators have  
379 completed the program of professional development in scientifically  
380 based reading research and instruction, pursuant to section 10-148b, (3)  
381 the level of access to external coaches in literacy, and (4) whether there

382 is reading intervention staff embedded at such school or in the school  
383 district.

384 (b) The department shall identify the early literacy needs of each  
385 school and school district described in subsection (a) of this section  
386 based on the results of the reading readiness assessment conducted  
387 pursuant to [said] subsection (a) of this section, and provide, in  
388 collaboration with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading  
389 Success, tiered supports in early literacy as follows:

390 (1) Tier one universal supports shall [be provided to each such school  
391 district that is an educational reform district, as defined in section 10-  
392 262u, and] include online professional development modules aligned  
393 with the reading instruction survey, as described in section 10-145r, and  
394 other literacy modules and programs available in the state;

395 (2) Tier two targeted supports shall include (A) a two-year program  
396 of literacy leadership training for certain teachers and administrators,  
397 (B) targeted professional development, in accordance with the  
398 provisions of section 10-148b, using the results of the reading instruction  
399 survey, as described in section 10-145r, and (C) external coaching  
400 support using funding received pursuant to section 10-223h or 10-262u,  
401 as amended by this act; and

402 (3) Tier three intensive supports shall include multiyear support from  
403 the department and a commitment from such school or school district,  
404 that includes, but need not be limited to, (A) the use of funding received  
405 pursuant to section 10-262u, as amended by this act, to support an early  
406 literacy program for students enrolled in kindergarten to grade [three]  
407 five, inclusive, (B) technical support in the drafting and submission of  
408 alliance district reading plans, as described in section 10-262u, as  
409 amended by this act, (C) identifying and embedding dedicated literacy  
410 coaches and reading interventionists, (D) targeted and intensive  
411 professional development, and (E) funds for assessment and  
412 instructional materials.

413 (c) Any tiered supports in early literacy provided under this section

414 shall be aligned with any turnaround plan, developed pursuant to  
415 section 10-223h, or alliance district plan, developed pursuant to section  
416 10-262u, as amended by this act, as applicable.

417 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) The Department of Education  
418 shall establish a Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success. The  
419 center shall be responsible for (1) collaborating with the department in  
420 the implementation of the coordinated state-wide reading plan for  
421 students in kindergarten to grade five, inclusive, established pursuant  
422 to section 10-14v of the general statutes, as amended by this act; (2)  
423 researching and developing, in collaboration with the department and  
424 Office of Early Childhood, a birth to grade twelve reading success  
425 strategy to be included in the alignment of reading instruction with the  
426 two-generational initiative, established pursuant to section 17b-112l of  
427 the general statutes; (3) (A) providing direct support to schools and  
428 boards of education to improve reading outcomes for students in  
429 kindergarten to grade five, inclusive, and other reading initiatives, and  
430 (B) supporting teachers, schools and boards of education engaged in  
431 improving through coaching, leadership training, professional  
432 development, parental engagement and technical assistance that is  
433 consistent with the intensive reading instruction program, as described  
434 in section 10-14u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and  
435 aligned with evidence-based practices; (4) providing independent,  
436 random reviews of how a local or regional board of education is  
437 implementing (A) a reading curriculum model or program for grades  
438 prekindergarten to grade five, inclusive, pursuant to section 1 of this act,  
439 and (B) an approved reading assessment, pursuant to section 10-14t of  
440 the general statutes, as amended by this act; (5) receiving and publicly  
441 reporting, not later than September 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter,  
442 the reading curriculum model or program being implemented by each  
443 local and regional board of education pursuant to section 1 of this act;  
444 (6) developing and maintaining an Internet web site for the purpose of  
445 disseminating tools and information associated with the intensive  
446 reading instruction program for student reading; (7) serving as a  
447 collaborative center for institutions of higher education and making  
448 available to the faculty of teacher preparation programs (A) the science

449 of teaching reading, (B) the intensive reading instruction program, and  
450 (C) samples of available reading curriculum models or programs  
451 adopted pursuant to section 2 of this act; (8) reviewing and publicly  
452 reporting on progress made by teacher preparation programs to include  
453 reading curriculum models or programs adopted pursuant to section 2  
454 of this act; and (9) supporting the development of research-based,  
455 successful virtual and remote literacy development strategies.

456 (b) The Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success shall be  
457 under the direction of a director who shall, in consultation with the  
458 Reading Leadership Implementation Council described in subsection (c)  
459 of this section, be responsible for (1) overseeing all activities of the  
460 center, (2) facilitating communication between the center, local and  
461 regional boards of education, the Department of Education and other  
462 affiliates of the center, and (3) coordinating the dissemination of  
463 information, tools and services made available by the center.

464 (c) The activities of the center shall be implemented by the Reading  
465 Leadership Implementation Council which shall consist of the following  
466 members: (1) The director of the center, or the director's designee; (2) the  
467 director of reading initiatives for the Department of Education, as  
468 described in section 10-3c of the general statutes, as amended by this act;  
469 (3) the executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,  
470 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee;  
471 (4) an individual designated by the Governor who has experience in  
472 literacy or education and is engaged in the development and  
473 implementation of the intensive reading instruction program; (5) two  
474 individuals, designated by the chairperson of the Black and Puerto  
475 Rican Caucus of the General Assembly, one of whom has experience  
476 with literacy or education and is engaged in the development and  
477 implementation of the intensive reading instruction program, provided  
478 such individual is not a member of the General Assembly; and (6) the  
479 dean of the Neag School of Education at The University of Connecticut,  
480 or the dean's designee. The Reading Leadership Implementation  
481 Council shall develop and publish annual goals for the center and meet  
482 at least once every two months. The Reading Leadership

483 Implementation Council may establish an advisory board that consists  
484 of representatives from public, private and philanthropic organizations,  
485 and is responsible for providing advice, guidance and resources for the  
486 center's goals and mission.

487 (d) The Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success shall hire  
488 reading coaches who have experience and expertise in the intensive  
489 reading instruction program. Such reading coaches shall (1) provide  
490 training and professional development on the intensive reading  
491 instruction program, literacy leadership and effective instruction to  
492 teachers, (2) work directly with teachers to support the implementation  
493 of the intensive reading instruction program and attend school and  
494 school district leadership, data and planning meetings, (3) provide  
495 coaching to teachers, and (4) lead and participate in family engagement  
496 activities.

497 Sec. 10. Section 10-3c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
498 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

499 There shall be a director of reading initiatives within the Department  
500 of Education. The director shall be responsible for (1) administering the  
501 intensive reading instruction program to improve student literacy in  
502 kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, and close [the achievement  
503 gap] opportunity gaps, pursuant to section 10-14u, as amended by this  
504 act, (2) assisting in the development and administration of the program  
505 of professional development for teachers and principals in scientifically  
506 based reading research and instruction, pursuant to section 10-148b, (3)  
507 administering the coordinated state-wide reading plan for students in  
508 kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, pursuant to section 10-14v,  
509 as amended by this act, (4) administering the incentive program  
510 described in section 10-14w, (5) providing assistance to local and  
511 regional boards of education in the administration of the reading  
512 assessments described in section 10-14t, as amended by this act, and the  
513 implementation of school district reading plans, (6) providing  
514 information and assistance to parents and guardians of students relating  
515 to reading and literacy instruction, (7) addressing reading and literacy

516 issues related to students who are English language learners, [and] (8)  
517 developing and administering any other state-wide reading and literacy  
518 initiatives for students in kindergarten to grade twelve, inclusive, and  
519 (9) supporting the development of research-based virtual and remote  
520 literacy learning models and curricula.

521 Sec. 11. Subsection (d) of section 10-262u of the general statutes is  
522 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
523 *2021*):

524 (d) The local or regional board of education for a town designated as  
525 an alliance district may apply to the Commissioner of Education, at such  
526 time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, to receive any  
527 increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the  
528 prior fiscal year pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-262i.  
529 Applications pursuant to this subsection shall include objectives and  
530 performance targets and a plan that are developed, in part, on the  
531 strategic use of student academic performance data. Such plan may  
532 include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) A tiered system of  
533 interventions for the schools under the jurisdiction of such board based  
534 on the needs of such schools, (2) ways to strengthen the foundational  
535 programs in reading, through the intensive reading instruction program  
536 pursuant to section 10-14u, as amended by this act, to ensure reading  
537 mastery in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, with a focus on  
538 standards and instruction, proper use of data, intervention strategies,  
539 current information for teachers, parental engagement, and teacher  
540 professional development, (3) additional learning time, including  
541 extended school day or school year programming administered by  
542 school personnel or external partners, (4) a talent strategy that includes,  
543 but is not limited to, teacher and school leader recruitment and  
544 assignment, career ladder policies that draw upon guidelines for a  
545 model teacher evaluation program adopted by the State Board of  
546 Education, pursuant to section 10-151b, and adopted by each local or  
547 regional board of education. Such talent strategy may include  
548 provisions that demonstrate increased ability to attract, retain, promote  
549 and bolster the performance of staff in accordance with performance

550 evaluation findings and, in the case of new personnel, other indicators  
551 of effectiveness, (5) training for school leaders and other staff on new  
552 teacher evaluation models, (6) provisions for the cooperation and  
553 coordination with early childhood education providers to ensure  
554 alignment with district expectations for student entry into kindergarten,  
555 including funding for an existing local Head Start program, (7)  
556 provisions for the cooperation and coordination with other  
557 governmental and community programs to ensure that students receive  
558 adequate support and wraparound services, including community  
559 school models, (8) provisions for implementing and furthering state-  
560 wide education standards adopted by the State Board of Education and  
561 all activities and initiatives associated with such standards, (9) strategies  
562 for attracting and recruiting minority teachers and administrators, (10)  
563 provisions for the enhancement of bilingual education programs,  
564 pursuant to section 10-17f, or other language acquisition services to  
565 English language learners, including, but not limited to, participation in  
566 the English language learner pilot program, established pursuant to  
567 section 10-17n, (11) entering into the model school district  
568 responsibilities agreement, described in section 10-223l, (12) leadership  
569 succession plans that provide training and learning opportunities for  
570 administrators and are designed to assist in the seamless transition of  
571 school and district personnel in and out of leadership positions in the  
572 school district and the continuous implementation of plans developed  
573 under this subsection, and (13) any additional categories or goals as  
574 determined by the commissioner. Such plan shall demonstrate  
575 collaboration with key stakeholders, as identified by the commissioner,  
576 with the goal of achieving efficiencies and the alignment of intent and  
577 practice of current programs with conditional programs identified in  
578 this subsection. The commissioner may (A) require changes in any plan  
579 submitted by a local or regional board of education before the  
580 commissioner approves an application under this subsection, and (B)  
581 permit a local or regional board of education, as part of such plan, to use  
582 a portion of any funds received under this section for the purposes of  
583 paying tuition charged to such board pursuant to subdivision (1) of  
584 subsection (k) of section 10-264l or subsection (b) of section 10-264o.

585 Sec. 12. Section 10-15c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
586 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

587 (a) The public schools shall be open to all children five years of age  
588 and over who reach age five on or before the first day of January of any  
589 school year, and each such child shall have, and shall be so advised by  
590 the appropriate school authorities, an equal opportunity to participate  
591 in the activities, programs and courses of study offered in such public  
592 schools, at such time as the child becomes eligible to participate in such  
593 activities, programs and courses of study, without discrimination on  
594 account of race, as defined in section 46a-51, color, sex, gender identity  
595 or expression, religion, national origin or sexual orientation; provided  
596 boards of education may, by vote at a meeting duly called, admit to any  
597 school children under five years of age.

598 (b) Nothing in subsection (a) of this section shall be deemed to amend  
599 other provisions of the general statutes with respect to curricula,  
600 facilities or extracurricular activities.

601 Sec. 13. Section 10-16uu of the general statutes is repealed and the  
602 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

603 (a) For the school year commencing July 1, 2021, a local or regional  
604 board of education may offer the black and Latino studies course,  
605 approved pursuant to section 10-16tt, as amended by this act, in grades  
606 nine to twelve, inclusive.

607 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2022, and each school year  
608 thereafter, a local or regional board of education shall offer the black and  
609 Latino studies course in grades nine to twelve, inclusive.

610 Sec. 14. Section 10-16ss of the general statutes is repealed and the  
611 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

612 (a) For the school year commencing July 1, 2021, and each school year  
613 thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall include  
614 African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino  
615 studies as part of the curriculum for the school district, pursuant to

616 section 10-16b, as amended by this act. In developing and implementing  
617 the African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino  
618 studies curriculum, the board may utilize the curriculum materials  
619 made available by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection  
620 (d) of section 10-16b or other existing and appropriate public or private  
621 materials, personnel and resources, provided such curriculum is in  
622 accordance with the state-wide subject matter content standards,  
623 adopted by the state board pursuant to section 10-4.

624 (b) A local or regional board of education may accept gifts, grants and  
625 donations, including in-kind donations, designated for the development  
626 and implementation of the African-American and black studies and  
627 Puerto Rican and Latino studies curriculum under this section, including professional development and in-service training.  
628

629 Sec. 15. Section 10-16tt of the general statutes is repealed and the  
630 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

631 (a) (1) Not later than January 1, 2021, the State Board of Education  
632 shall review and approve the black and Latino studies course developed  
633 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section by the State Education  
634 Resource Center, established pursuant to section 10-357a. The state  
635 board shall approve such course if, following a review of such course,  
636 the state board determines that the content of such course is rigorous,  
637 aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the state board, and in  
638 accordance with the state-wide subject matter content standards,  
639 adopted by the state board pursuant to section 10-4.

640 (2) Not later than January 15, 2021, the state board, in consultation  
641 with the State Education Resource Center, shall submit a description of  
642 the black and Latino studies course, which includes the scope and  
643 sequence and course objective, and a report on the development and  
644 review of such course to the joint standing committee of the General  
645 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in  
646 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

647 (b) The State Education Resource Center shall develop a black and

648 Latino studies course. Such course shall be one credit and offered at the  
 649 high school level. In developing such course, the State Education  
 650 Resource Center may utilize existing and appropriate public or private  
 651 materials, personnel and other resources, including, but not limited to,  
 652 persons and organizations with subject matter expertise in African-  
 653 American, black, Puerto Rican or Latino studies, and the curriculum  
 654 materials made available pursuant to subsection (d) of section 10-16b.

655 (c) For the school years commencing July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2024,  
 656 inclusive, the Department of Education shall conduct an annual audit to  
 657 ensure that the black and Latino studies course approved pursuant to  
 658 this section is being offered by each local and regional board of  
 659 education. The department shall annually submit a report on such audit  
 660 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
 661 cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the  
 662 provisions of section 11-4a.

663 (d) For the school year commencing July 1, 2021, and each school year  
 664 thereafter, the State Education and Resource Center shall provide  
 665 technical assistance to local and regional boards of education in the  
 666 provision of professional development, pursuant to section 10-148a, and  
 667 in-service training, pursuant to section 10-220a, related to the teaching  
 668 of the black and Latino studies course approved pursuant to this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2021	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2021	New section
Sec. 3	July 1, 2021	10-16oo
Sec. 4	July 1, 2021	10-16b(a)
Sec. 5	July 1, 2021	10-14t
Sec. 6	July 1, 2021	10-14u
Sec. 7	July 1, 2021	10-14v
Sec. 8	July 1, 2021	10-14y
Sec. 9	July 1, 2021	New section
Sec. 10	July 1, 2021	10-3c
Sec. 11	July 1, 2021	10-262u(d)



The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Education, Dept.	GF - Cost	510,000	510,000
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup>	GF - Cost	210,630	210,630

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Alliance Districts	STATE MANDATE <sup>2</sup> - Cost	600,000 per district	600,000 per district

**Explanation**

The bill results in costs to Alliance Districts of approximately \$600,000 annually and to the state of \$720,630 annually, beginning in FY 22, due to the bill's requirements.

The bill results in a cost to Alliance Districts associated with hiring additional staff in order to implement the additional reading requirements contained within the bill. It is anticipated that each Alliance District would require one literacy coach and three additional reading interventionists, for a total cost to each Alliance District of approximately \$480,000. Statewide this yields a cost of approximately

<sup>1</sup>The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.3% of payroll in FY 22 and FY 23.

<sup>2</sup> State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

\$15.8 million for all 33 Alliance Districts. Additionally, Alliance Districts would require \$120,000 per district to provide summer school staffing support.

The bill also requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to establish the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, which is anticipated to result in a cost to SDE of approximately \$510,000 associated with hiring a Director, an Executive Assistant, an Associate Director, and two Education Consultants. In addition to salary costs, there would be a cost of \$210,630 in both FY 22 and FY 23 associated with fringe benefits.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 6620*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO READ AND ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes many changes in state law regarding school reading programs and creates a new Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success (i.e., “literacy center”) with the authority to approve at least five reading curriculum models or programs that must be used by local and regional boards of education.

The bill (1) allows local boards to ask the education commissioner for more time to implement the models or programs and (2) creates a waiver process where local boards can seek approval to use a different model or program.

The State Department of Education (SDE) must establish the literacy center and the bill details the center’s responsibilities, including hiring reading coaches to be used at the local school district level.

The bill makes changes in several reading and literacy related laws and programs including:

1. adding a definition of reading to the required program of instruction at all public schools (§ 4);
2. expanding grade levels that reading assessments must be used to determine reading proficiency from kindergarten to grade 3 under current law by adding grades 4 and 5 (§ 5);
3. broadening the intensive reading instruction program by making it available to all alliance districts (§ 6); and

4. making several changes to the reading readiness program (§ 8) and the duties of the state director of reading initiatives (§ 10).

Finally, the bill makes the following changes unrelated to reading programs:

1. conforms the education anti-discrimination law to the definition of race in state human rights statute as amended by PA 21-2, thus including hair and hairstyles in the definition (§ 12);
2. requires the high school course in black and Latino studies that will be offered in the 2022-2023 school year to also be offered in each following year (§ 13);
3. allows school districts to accept donations related to professional development and in-service training for the required African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies curriculum (§ 14); and
4. requires the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to provide technical assistance to boards of education for their professional development and in-service training regarding the black and Latino studies course (§ 15).

The bill also replaces the term “achievement gap” with “opportunity gap” in the laws regarding the intensive reading instruction program and the reading and math curricula that SDE must develop. Under the bill, an opportunity gap has the same meaning as achievement gap under current law: the existence of a significant disparity in the academic performance of students among and between (1) racial groups, (2) ethnic groups, (3) socioeconomic groups, (4) genders, and (5) English language learners and students whose primary language is English.

Under current law, the five areas of reading for the intensive reading program are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. The bill specifies “vocabulary development,” instead of just “vocabulary.” It also keeps “fluency” and replaces “text

comprehension” with “reading fluency, including oral skills and reading comprehension.” Additionally, the bill adds this definition of the five areas of reading to a curriculum waiver provision (§ 1), the literacy center’s approved reading curricula (§ 2), and the required program of instruction all school districts (§ 4).

The bill also makes numerous conforming and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021, except the provisions regarding the anti-discrimination law (§ 12) and the black and Latino studies course (§ 13) are upon passage.

## **§§ 1 & 2 — Required Prekindergarten to Grade 5 Reading Curriculum Model or Program**

### ***Curriculum Model or Program (§ 1)***

The bill requires each local and regional board of education to implement each year, beginning July 1, 2023, a reading curriculum model or program for grades prekindergarten to 5, inclusive, that has been approved by the literacy center.

It requires each board, by July 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, to notify the education commissioner and the literacy center of which reading curriculum model or program that the board is implementing.

The bill allows boards that can demonstrate to the commissioner that they have insufficient resources or funding to request more time to implement the model or program if the board shows continued efforts to implement a reading curriculum model or program. (The bill does not specify how much additional time the commissioner may grant.)

### ***Curriculum Requirement Waiver (§ 1)***

The bill sets criteria for the commissioner to grant a waiver to the requirement for a school district to use one of the literacy center-approved curriculum models or programs. A local or regional board of education can request a waiver to use an alternative reading curriculum model or program if it is (1) evidenced-based and scientifically-based and (2) focused on competency in the five areas of reading: (a) phonemic

awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) vocabulary development, and (e) reading fluency, including oral skills and reading comprehension, as determined by the commissioner in consultation with the center.

### ***Five Approved Reading Curriculum Models or Programs (§ 2)***

The bill requires the literacy center to approve, by July 1, 2022, at least five reading curriculum models or programs to be implemented by boards of education. The models or programs approved must be (1) evidence-based and scientifically-based and (2) focused on competency in same five areas of reading described above.

## **§ 9 — Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success**

### ***Center Responsibilities***

The bill requires SDE to create the literacy center and specifies its duties. In addition to approving at least five reading curriculum models or programs (as mentioned above), the center is responsible for:

1. receiving and publicly reporting, by September 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, the reading curriculum model or program being implemented by each board of education as required under the bill;
2. conducting independent random reviews of school districts' implementation of (a) a reading curriculum model or program required under the bill and (b) an approved reading assessment (see § 5);
3. collaborating with SDE to implement the statewide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade five that is amended under the bill (see § 7);
4. researching and developing, in collaboration with SDE and the Office of Early Childhood, a birth to grade 12 reading success strategy to be included in the alignment of reading instruction with the state's two-generational initiative established in statute;
5. providing direct support to schools and boards of education to

- 
- improve reading outcomes for students in kindergarten to grade five, inclusive, and other reading initiatives;
6. supporting the community of teachers, schools, and boards engaged in improvement through coaching, leadership training, professional development, parental engagement, and technical assistance that is consistent with the existing intensive reading instruction program (see § 6) and aligned with evidence-based practices;
  7. developing and maintaining an internet website to disseminate tools and information associated with the intensive reading instruction program for student reading;
  8. serving as a collaborative center for institutions of higher education and making available to the faculty of teacher preparation programs (a) materials related to the science of teaching reading, (b) the intensive reading instruction program, and (c) samples of available reading curriculum models or programs adopted under the bill;
  9. reviewing and publicly reporting on progress made by teacher preparation programs to include reading curriculum models or programs adopted under the bill; and
  10. supporting the development of research-based, successful virtual and remote literacy development strategies.

### ***Center Director***

The bill requires the literacy center's director, in consultation with the Reading Leadership Implementation Council (see below), to be responsible for (1) overseeing the center's activities; (2) facilitating communication between the center, boards of education, SDE, and other affiliates of the center; and (3) coordinating the dissemination of information, tools, and services made available by the center.

### ***Reading Leadership Implementation Council***

The bill requires the literacy center's activities to be implemented by the Reading Leadership Implementation Council. Under the bill, the council consists of the following members:

1. the center's director or the director's designee;
2. SDE's director of reading initiatives;
3. the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity's executive director or his designee;
4. an individual the governor chooses who has experience in literacy or education and is engaged in the development and implementation of the intensive reading instruction program;
5. two individuals the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus chairperson chooses, one of whom has experience with literacy or education and is engaged in the development and implementation of the intensive reading instruction program, as long as the individual is not a member of the General Assembly; and
6. the dean of the UConn's Neag School of Education or the dean's designee.

The council must develop and publish the annual goals for the center and meet at least once every two months. The council may establish an advisory board that consists of representatives from public, private, and philanthropic organizations, and is responsible for providing advice, guidance and resources for the center's goals and mission.

### ***Reading Coaches***

The bill requires the literacy center to hire reading coaches who have experience and expertise in the intensive reading instruction program that is amended in the bill (§ 6). (Presumably, the coaches working in the program under current law gain experience in local districts. It is otherwise unclear how coaches could have experience in the intensive reading instruction program before the center has implemented this new version of it.)

These coaches must:

1. provide training and professional development on the intensive reading instruction program, literacy leadership, and effective instruction to teachers;
2. work directly with teachers to support the implementation of the intensive reading instruction program and attend school district leadership, data, and planning meetings;
3. provide coaching to teachers; and
4. lead and participate in family engagement activities.

### **§ 3 — Reading and math Curricula Developed by SDE**

Current law requires SDE to approve and make available model curricula and frameworks in reading and math for prekindergarten to grade four, inclusive, to be used by school districts or individual schools that SDE has identified as having academic achievement gaps. The bill removes reading curricula and frameworks from this requirement and replaces the term “achievement gap” with “opportunity gap.”

### **§ 4 — Defining Reading in the Required Program of Instruction for schools**

By law, school districts must provide certain subjects and topics in the program of instruction they offer to their students. This includes language arts, including reading, writing, grammar, speaking, and spelling. The bill adds the definition of “reading” as evidenced-based instruction that focuses on competency in the five areas of reading as mentioned above.

### **§ 5 — Reading Assessments**

The bill requires the literacy center, rather than SDE, to compile a list of approved reading assessments for use by boards of education to identify children reading below proficiency. On or before January 1, 2022, the literacy center must compile the list of approved reading assessments for the school year beginning July 1, 2023, and each year

after. The bill eliminates SDE's duty to develop the assessments beginning July 1, 2021. (Since the bill does not begin the requirement for the center's assessment until July 1, 2023, it appears there will be no assessment for the 2022 school year.)

The bill also expands the grade levels for which the assessment must be used from the current kindergarten to grade 3 to kindergarten to grade 5. The bill keeps the existing requirements that the assessments, among other things, (1) measure phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; (2) provide opportunities for periodic formative assessment during the school year; (3) produce data that is useful for informing individual and classroom instruction; and (4) assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities.

The bill also requires the commissioner to report, by January 15, 2022, the list of approved reading assessments to the Education Committee.

### **§ 6 — Intensive Reading Instruction Program**

The bill broadens the intensive reading instruction program by requiring the education commissioner to provide the program to any alliance district board of education that requests it. By law the intensive reading program has several components including (1) an intensive reading intervention strategy, (2) supplemental reading instruction, and (3) a summer reading program. (It is not clear how all the components of the reading instruction program are implemented as, under the bill, the reading instruction program must be provided to alliance districts that request it; but other components, such as the supplemental reading instruction and a summer reading program, are mandatory for all alliance districts.)

Alliance districts are the 33 lowest performing school districts based on the district's accountability index (AI) score (see BACKGROUND). The commissioner may choose to include the intensive reading program in the tiered supports in early literacy provided under the reading readiness program.

Under current law the commissioner chooses five elementary schools that are (1) located in an educational reform district (the 10 school districts with the lowest AI scores), (2) participating in the commissioner's network of schools, or (3) among the lowest 5% of elementary schools AI scores for reading and mathematics. She may select five additional elementary schools each school year.

Under the bill, for the school year beginning July 1, 2021, and each year after, the commissioner must consult with the literacy center director in creating the intensive reading program, which the bill expands to cover grades 4 and 5, in addition to current law's kindergarten through grade 3.

The bill modifies the intensive reading program components including (1) the intensive reading intervention strategy for each participating school, including literacy coaches; (2) the supplemental reading instruction, including a reading remediation plan for each student identified with a reading deficiency; (3) summer school for any student whose reading level is below proficiency at the end of the school year; and (4) the required reporting to the Education Committee.

### ***Intensive Reading Intervention Strategy***

As part of the reading program, current law requires SDE to develop an intensive reading intervention strategy to ensure all students are reading proficiently by grade 3. Under the bill, SDE must consult with the literacy center to develop the strategy that will be used by an alliance district elementary school with students who are not reading at or above grade level to ensure the students are reading proficiently by grade 5.

Under current law, the strategy must include one SDE-funded external literacy coach for each school and four SDE-funded reading interventionists for each school. The bill eliminates (1) the specific number of coaches and interventionists and instead says coaches and interventionists will be made available to the schools and (2) the current law's requirement that SDE funds the coaches and reading interventionists.

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Other aspects are left unchanged, including that the strategy include:

1. rigorous assessments in reading skills,
2. scientifically-based reading research and instruction,
3. training for teachers and administrators in scientifically-based reading research and instruction, including, training for school administrators on how to assess a classroom to ensure that all children are proficient in reading.

### ***Supplemental Reading Instruction***

Starting with the school year beginning July 1, 2021, each alliance district board of education, in consultation with the literacy center director, must provide supplemental reading instruction for students in kindergarten to grade 5, inclusive, who are reading below proficiency. Under current law, only schools selected by the commissioner must provide the supplemental instruction, and only for grades kindergarten to grade 3.

The reading interventionists must develop a reading remediation plan for any student who is below proficiency and enrolled in an elementary school in an alliance district.

The bill makes conforming changes regarding notification of parents or guardians of students, grades kindergarten to 5, who have been identified as being below proficiency in reading and will receive these services.

The bill requires each alliance district board of education that provides supplemental reading instruction through the intensive reading program to report to SDE in a time and manner the agency requires on reading progress for each student and the specific reading interventions and supports that were implemented.

### ***Intensive Summer Reading Program***

Under current law, any student of a priority school district who is in the intensive reading program and is reading below proficiency at the

end of the school year must be enrolled in an intensive summer school reading program that includes required components, such as a comprehensive reading intervention and scientifically-based reading research and instruction strategies. The bill expands this requirement to alliance districts, of which there are 33 compared to 15 priority school districts.

The bill requires each alliance district board of education to, in consultation with the literacy center director, provide any student in kindergarten to grade 5, who is reading below proficiency at the end of the school year, the intensive summer reading instruction program.

### ***Reporting Requirement***

The bill requires, by October 1, 2021, and each year after, SDE to report to the Education Committee on student reading levels in the intensive reading program, including recommendations on model components of the school reading intervention strategy that may be replicated in other alliance districts.

### **§ 7 — Statewide Reading Plan**

The bill expands the existing statewide reading plan that currently applies to students in kindergarten to grade 3, by adding grades 4 and 5. It requires the plan to be developed by January 1, 2021, in collaboration with the literacy center (see COMMENT). The plan must be modified to include the alignment of reading standards, instruction, and assessment for students in kindergarten to grade 5, rather than grade 3.

### **§ 8 — Reading Readiness program**

The bill requires SDE to operate the reading readiness program, which, under existing law, provides tiered early literacy supports to alliance districts, in collaboration with the literacy center. Also, SDE must conduct reading readiness assessments for students in these districts in grades 4 and 5, in addition to current law's kindergarten to grade 3.

Under current law, SDE provides three tiers of early literacy supports and the bill requires the supports be provided in collaboration with the literacy center. Also, the bill expands the tier I supports of online professional development modules in literacy, including the reading instruction survey, to all alliance districts rather than the 10 educational reform districts.

### **§ 10 — Director of Reading Initiatives**

Under current law, the director of reading initiatives has many duties including administering the intensive reading program (§ 6) and the statewide reading plan (§ 7). The bill makes conforming changes to these duties by expanding the grade range from kindergarten to grade 3 to kindergarten to grade 5 and replacing “achievement gap” with “opportunity gap.”

The bill also gives the director the new duty of supporting development of research-based virtual and remote literacy learning models and curricula.

### **§ 12 — Anti-discrimination law and Hairstyles**

The bill modifies the education anti-discrimination law to conform the definition of race to the definition in the human rights statute as amended by PA 21-2 (HB 6515). Current education law states a child has equal opportunity to participate in school and related activities without discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. PA 21-2 expands the definition of race to include ethnic traits historically associated with race, including hair texture and protective hairstyles. Under the act, protective hairstyles include wigs, headwraps, and hairstyles such as individual braids, cornrows, locs, twists, Bantu knots, afros, and afro puffs.

### **§ 13 — Black and Latino Studies Course**

The bill requires the high school course in black and Latino studies, which under current law is required to be offered in the 2022-2023 school year to be also offered in each following school year.

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**§§ 14 & 15 — Professional Development for Black and Latino Studies Course**

For each school year, beginning with the 2021-2022 year, the bill requires the State Education Resource Center to provide technical assistance to local boards of education for their professional development and in-service training regarding the black and Latino studies course.

The bill also expands the law that allows school districts to accept gifts, grants, and donations to support the development of the required African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies curriculum to allow them to accept gifts, grants, and donations for the related professional development and in-service training.

**BACKGROUND*****Accountability Index Scores***

“Accountability index” for a school district or an individual school means the score resulting from multiple weighted measures that (1) include the mastery test scores (i.e., the performance index score) and, if appropriate, high school graduation rates, and (2) may include academic growth over time, attendance and chronic absenteeism, postsecondary education and career readiness, enrollment in and graduation from institutions of higher education and postsecondary education programs, civics and arts education, and physical fitness (CGS § 10-223e(a)).

**COMMENT*****Date Issue***

The bill requires SDE to develop a statewide reading plan (§ 7) for students in kindergarten to grade 5 by January 1, 2021, a date that has already passed.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference - APP

Yea 35 Nay 3 (03/29/2021)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 40 Nay 10 (04/21/2021)